

## Treblinka: An Exceptional Guide

### Robert Faurisson

In some conference presentations, in a video and in my correspondence, I have happened to bring up, in regard to Treblinka, the testimony of Marian Olszuk but, absorbed in the ordeal of the revisionist struggle, I have, over the last fifteen years, always put off till later the drafting of a text on my encounter with this exceptional Polish witness. My text would, more generally, also have dealt with the journey that, in 1988, led me first to Treblinka-Malkinia in Communist Poland, then to Oranienburg-Sachsenhausen and Ravensbrück in Communist Germany. Ernst Zündel kept a set of seven videos on my visits to those three camps. I am unaware whether the tapes were destroyed by the 1995 arson attack that left his big house in Toronto devastated. He is today in a high security prison and I shall not now inquire of him on such a matter. As concerns Treblinka, I still have in my possession thirty or so photographs that bear witness to my investigation at that shrine of the "Shoah".

Two men accompanied me in this on-the-spot investigation in June and July of 1988: the German Tjudar Rudolph and the young Canadian Eugen Ernst. The former was kind enough to serve as interpreter and draughtsman, while the latter was our cameraman and photographer. I express my thanks to them here for their dedication, competence and also their spirit of sacrifice in an adventure that was to prove difficult, with exhausting days of work, bad accommodation and some troubles brought on by the Polish Communist authorities. I also thank my friend Ernst Zündel for having covered our travel and accommodation expenses.

#### My investigation method

My normal investigation method consists first in assembling as much documentation as possible on a given subject, then to get away from the writings or records so dear to those whom I call "paper historians" and, finally, go to the place of inspection. There, after a prolonged examination of the site, I look for witnesses. My questioning is, in general, direct and insistent; in any case it conveys not a hint of shyness. Witnesses of all ages, stations in life and sides in an issue may interest me, but experience has taught that, in this sort of investigation, one is best advised to set about finding witnesses as non-intellectual as possible and who, at the time of the events, were aged no more than twenty.

It must be said that the 1988 mission was hardly my first of this kind. In the sixties I had already acquired the experience of a delicate, even dangerous, inspection into the summary executions carried out in the summer of 1944 by the "resistance fighters" or "terrorists" in a very limited area of the French *département* of Charente (between the cities of Angoulême and Limoges). I had questioned communists and non-communists on episodes that they preferred to keep hidden. In the seventies, I had conducted other difficult investigations as well that had led me, as Montaigne wrote, to "rub and grind [my] brain against another's" and to discard any form of shyness. I especially think that in those years I was at a school that taught me to sense the value of a witness and his testimony. From this standpoint I was to encounter, during my investigation of Treblinka in 1988, a witness of exceptional quality.

#### An exceptional witness: Marian Olszuk

At Treblinka, it was my good fortune to find an exceptional witness and indeed guide in the person of Marian Olszuk. 63 years old, he was born just nearby in Wolka Okraglia. At the period in which we are interested here, that is, 1942-1943, he was aged 17 and 18. One could hardly imagine finding a man who had lived closer to the two Treblinka camps. From December 1941 to July 1944, Treblinka I, located quite close to a gravel quarry that supplied Warsaw, had served as a prison camp mainly for Poles, Jewish or non-Jewish, found guilty of breaking the occupying forces' laws. From 23 July 1942 to 14 October 1944, Treblinka II was a camp reserved for Jews, mainly Jews from Warsaw; legend was to make of it - in the Allies' jargon - an "extermination camp", the extermination being that of at least 870,000 Jews, extending over approximately nine months (from late July 1942 to April 1943, according to the *Encyclopedia of the Holocaust*). One of a family of eight children, Marian Olszuk worked every day in the quarry with other Poles who were more or less free to come and go as they liked alongside prisoners watched over either by German soldiers armed with pistols or by Ukrainian guards with carbines. His father was a lumberjack. In the evenings, the young man returned to the family farm, which lay a mile and a quarter north of Treblinka II. Often he would go to the plot owned by his father *300 metres* from the barbed wire of the "extermination camp's" eastern perimeter. The soil was poor, and they grew rye and lupin. Passing by the foot of a watchtower, the young Marian would sometimes strike up a conversation with the sentries who, companionable enough, would now and then toss him a cigarette from on high. The camp covered only between 13 and 14 hectares (compared with the 388 hectares of the camp at Oranienburg-Sachsenhausen to the north of Berlin!). In 1942-1943, the space taken up by the "extermination camp" was practically devoid of trees or large shrubbery and, consequently, the neighbouring farm folk and passers-by could easily observe, through the barbed-wire fence, the prisoners and the guards as well as the various buildings of a camp that today is claimed to have been ultra-secret. From the point of view of an onlooker facing the entrance to the camp, the Olszuk family farm was located a mile and a quarter to the left whilst their plot lay, to the immediate right, 300 metres from the camp's eastern limit. Thus Marian Olszuk passed close by the "extermination camp" every day that he went to work at the quarry, and, when he worked on the family plot, he was also right near the said "extermination camp".

There was of course no question of the young man's entering the camp area, but people gathered in crowds every day at the gate, openly engaging in barter and black market dealing. Traffickers came from Warsaw to sell goods to the Ukrainian guards who, in turn, would do business with the Jewish prisoners to whom they sold food, including, for those very Jews, ham and sausages, which, at the period, were a luxury. The existence of the two camps at Treblinka was of common knowledge and the Jewish inmates, on the whole, seemed not to be without money, gold, or jewellery.

Had Marian Olszuk ever noticed signs of homicidal activities on the part of the Germans in this "extermination camp"? The answer was no. Once he had seen a big fire blazing within but it was a mound of old clothing, about four metres high, in flames. Never had he seen any corpses burning. Still, he had heard several times, at night, the cries and wailings of women and children that reached his farm. Now and then, a ghastly stench emanated from the camp. Had our witness heard talk of gas chambers? Yes, he had met a Russian who told him that the Germans used "a mobile gas chamber on rails" (*sic*). It was near Treblinka I that the Germans executed the condemned by firing squad. In his movements about, the young worker-farmer often happened upon Jews who were housed in the Treblinka II camp; these Jews worked at various tasks in the woods, overseen by Ukrainian guards who, for their part, often deserted. The food was appalling. His own work consisted, eight hours a day, in loading by shovel small trucks (or wagons?) with sand or gravel. In the winter cold the work was particularly hard going. Personally he had never seen a Jew killed. One day, his father had given clothes to a Jew who had escaped from the camp. Convoys of Jews arrived every day. When he was finally called up for work in Prussia, Marian fled, finding refuge in Warsaw, and returned to the farm only after the camps had been shut down. He recalled that common graves were uncovered, and gold and rubies found amongst the human remains.

Most staggering is that upon the "liberation" of Poland and after the war no administrative or police authority had questioned him about what had taken place at Treblinka. There had been commissions of inquiry, whose extravagant reports, worthy in all respects of the Soviet report on Katyn (USSR-008), are known, but none of those commissions had asked the Olszucs to testify. Still in 1988, the official camp guide, Marja Pisarek, coldly asserted "No one in the vicinity will talk to you." But Marian Olszuk, as is clear, was to talk to us at length and, unlike another Polish witness, clear-headedly.

### **The False Dimensions of the "Extermination Camp"**

An incident would occur during our inquiry. I had insisted that our little team should bring along a surveyor's chain and we spent quite some time taking the measurements of the two camps. On the second day of our acquaintance, Marian Olszuk, well turned-out for the occasion, had agreed to show us on the spot the "extermination camp's" real dimensions. Video camera whirring, we were able to accompany him from one end to the other. I believe I may rightly say that simply by watching his movements we discovered in our witness the true son of the soil who, more than forty years on, was remembering before our eyes every detail of the terrain. Trees and bushes had grown where formerly the land was practically bare, and, at times, when he came upon a tree, the question arose for him whether the camp's boundary ran to the left or right of it. It was impressive to observe the weathered farmer stop, reflect and make his decision. The video has recorded those moments. It was in the course of this walk that our man gave us a revelation: the camp had in reality been of a smaller size than what the tourists were told; in effect, after the war, in 1947, the authorities had bought the abutting parcels of several small holders in order to enlarge the "extermination camp". The first family to be thus expropriated had been that of Franciszek Pawlowski and the second, the Olszucs who, for their part, had only had to part with an area of 2,500 square metres. In the attached drawing, made by Tjudor Rudolph with what means were to hand, a difference in area will be noted between the real camp of 1942-1943, covering about 14 hectares, and the 1988 camp for tourists, about 23 hectares. At the end of this visit of the grounds, Marian Olszuk had taken leave of us and, for our part, we had resumed our labours of measuring when suddenly there drew up on a moped the deputy curator of the Treblinka museum. Upon noticing our presence he had become irate, telling us that never in all his life had he seen such doings as ours. I weighed his anger and pointed out that it was precisely the better to gauge what the prisoners of Treblinka had endured that it seemed necessary to us to measure the dimensions of the camp itself. Suddenly calm and smiling, Tadeusz Kiryluk was ready to declare: "At bottom it's precisely people like you that we need!" We were to become nearly as good as friends with him and his superior, curator Wincenty Trebicky, who were indeed glad to give us an interview, which was recorded on video. Still, their bureaucratic talk differed completely from the testimony, so plainly the fruit of real experience, of the worker and farmer Marian Olszuk. Vague, stereotypical and marked by a perfectly hollow intellectuality, their words came straight from the regular orthodox literature. The two functionaries' accounts took on an unintentional burlesque aspect: by itself, the very setting in which they spoke, the "extermination camp" of such modest dimensions, inflicted a rebuff on the aberrations of the official argument that they were spouting forth, according to which, for instance, the Germans had killed, in the space of nine months, about 870,000 persons there, burying the bodies on the spot (W. Trebicky, for his part, fancied the quite greater number of 1,500,000 victims!).

It was our intention to go back and see Marian Olszuk a third time for we still had a whole battery of questions to put to him. Unhappily there was henceforth the risk of compromising him. The communist police, indubitably informed of our activity, might now at any moment take him in for interrogation. Regretfully we decided to meet no more with this guide who was both providential and unexpected.

It must be said that, on the previous day, Tjudor Rudolph, Eugen Ernst and I had had to do with the police, who held us for an hour's questioning in a room at the railway station of nearby Malkinia. We had in effect been reported for filming the station and some carriages, comparable in every way to the goods carriages of the last war. But there, although unable to see Marian Olszuk again, I was to find the trail of a rare bird: the famous locomotive driver filmed by Claude Lanzmann in *Shoah*.

### **The locomotive driver's spontaneous admission**

One of Claude Lanzmann's most prominent witnesses was none other than Henryk Gawkowski, seen in the film *Shoah* dressed in his driver's uniform, wearing a cap and driving an engine as at the time when he transported convoys of Jews from Warsaw to Malkinia, then to Treblinka. In a re-enactment scene, he leans out of the cabin door and, running a finger across his throat, he directs that gesture towards the space formerly occupied by the Jews as a sign that they were about to be killed (transcripts of the dialogue and descriptions of the stage business can be found in Lanzmann's book *Shoah*, with a preface by Simone de Beauvoir, Paris, Fayard, 1985, p. 47-49).

I came upon our man in Malkinia, where he was born in 1922. In the mornings, our question and answer sessions went smoothly enough but, in the afternoons, under the influence of drink, H. Gawkowski became an endless talker and proved incapable of replying to the queries. He went on about everything as if he had seen it all. He did not recall Lanzmann's name but perhaps the latter, by force of habit, had introduced himself under some assumed name, arrogating academic titles to boot (*Écrits révisionnistes (1974-1978)*, 1999, II, p. 746). On the other hand, he did not fail to speak with fond remembrance of the film's director, a Frenchman as he let us know, who had supplied him with such fine "Spanish wines".

By chance, one morning while he was reciting stories that he had plainly read and not lived, I interrupted him to put, point-blank, a question that would topple the whole edifice of his boastings and regurgitations of what he had taught himself. I asked him: "But then, were you aware of leading all those Jews to their death, day after day, and over a period of nearly fifteen months?" The reply

burst forth: "No, of course not!" I asked him at what moment he had become aware. Answer: "After the war." In other words, to take up the American revisionist Arthur Robert Butz's parable, H. Gawkowski was of the cohort of those who, at the time, had not seen "the elephant". He had neither seen it nor heard it trumpet but, a good while later, had become convinced that, in this particular corner of Poland, a monstrous pachyderm had, for nearly fifteen months, secretly haunted the environs, spreading terror as it went. Enough to make one think that "the elephant" was magical, unless it were only a mirage!

### **The "Extermination Camp" was indeed a Transit Camp**

In order to realise that the alleged gas chambers of Auschwitz cannot have existed, it suffices to see the quite real gas chamber of an American penitentiary. In order to grasp that the purported rates of operation of the Auschwitz crematory ovens are fictitious, it suffices to inform oneself of the rates of operation, quite real, of the crematory ovens in use nowadays. In order to see for oneself that the story attributed to Anne Frank is riddled with physical impossibilities, it suffices to visit, eyes open, the "Anne Frank House" in Amsterdam. In a like manner, in order to gauge the extent to which the prodigious secret exterminations and inhumations of Jews at Treblinka are but a lie, it suffices to cover on foot today the quadrilateral once formed by the camp and to note its modest proportions (about 248 metres by 372 metres by 468 metres by 472 metres).

The revisionists can obviously amass a hundred other arguments, go over the "testimonies", the "admissions", the "confessions", the trials and the books in which, at every moment, for a reader with a bit of alertness, the Jewish accusations concerning the Treblinka camp show themselves to be illusory and false. Amusement may be found in the fact that, already at the Nuremberg trial, in 1946, the presiding judge, assisted by the Soviet prosecutor, quickly moved to prevent witness Samuel Rajzman from producing evidence supposedly showing a diagram of Treblinka; it must be said that, at the time, that particular Jew spoke of a "gas chamber" (in the singular) and of a "crematory oven" located in a place where it is admitted that there never was a crematory oven and where, according to a document that, in the International Military Tribunal's view, stated "facts of common knowledge", there had been only "steam chambers", and neither one nor more than one "gas chamber" (*IMG*, VII, p. 357 and document PS-3311). It may be remembered that the German Kurt Franz, by virtue of whose apparent confessions the argument of gassings at Treblinka was effectively strengthened, ended up writing quite plainly: "I had nothing to do with the gassings of Jews either at Treblinka or elsewhere (*Écrits révisionnistes*, op. cit., II, p. 753-755). It would be entertaining to reproduce, side by side, the Jewish or Communist diagrams of Treblinka II and demonstrate that, with regard to the purported extermination buildings, they are all remarkably vague and, besides, incompatible with one another.

But personally I prefer to spare my readers the repertory of my heaps of files, particularly on Treblinka, giving them, in the present circumstances, only the account of this visit of the camp in the company of a first-rate guide: the Pole Marian Olszuk.

When in 2000 Jürgen Graf asked me for advice in preparing his own visit to Treblinka with his friend Carlo Mattogno, I suggested that he come consult my documents on the subject and asked him to get in touch, once at Treblinka, with Marian Olszuk. I sent him some photographs attesting to my encounter with the latter. Unfortunately J. Graf was unable to come to France and, on location at Treblinka, he did not question the best of all possible witnesses and guides. I regret this all the more as he might have put to Marian Olszuk the questions still remaining from the time of my visit. I am perfectly sure that Marian Olszuk's replies would have been of precious help to J. Graf and C. Mattogno in the writing of their joint work *Treblinka, Vernichtungslager oder Durchgangslager?*, published in 2002 by Castle Hill Publishers (Hastings, UK).

In any event, the case is settled and, as their book and a hundred items of evidence show, Treblinka II can never have been anything but an ordinary and modest *Durchgangslager*, that is, a transit camp for Jews headed for Majdanek, Auschwitz, or other concentration and labour camps at points south or east.

The crude lie of Treblinka ought therefore to join, in the dustbins of history, the enormous lie of Auschwitz.

*Enclosures (for editor): 1. Photographs 2. Diagram of Treblinka II, drawn by Tjudar Rudolph after Marian Olszuk's testimony: the camp's true area was about 14 hectares; a few years after the war, that area was fallaciously increased to about 23 hectares.*

*It is interesting to note that the Encyclopaedia Judaica, whose first edition dates from the late sixties, honestly indicates an area of 13 hectares whereas the Encyclopedia [sic] of the Holocaust, published in 1990, speaks dishonestly of a rectangle of 400 by 600 metres, i.e. 24 hectares. One must be aware that, as is generally agreed, a rather sizeable part of the camp was occupied by administrative buildings, barracks for the Ukrainian and German guards, an infirmary, storehouses and workshops whilst a whole other sector housed male and female Jewish workers employed as tailors, cobblers and carpenters, or else assigned to the linen room or the cookhouses. All that would have left so much the less space for the extermination and inhumation of at least 870,000 Jews in the space of nine months (late July 1942 - April 1943). On the vague, fanciful and cacophonous "diagrams" that various Jewish "witnesses" have drawn for us, it may be noted that the area remaining for the handling of corpses can hardly, in all likelihood, have exceeded one or two hectares. In other words, in a space equal to that of one or two soccer fields, the following fourfold procedure is alleged to have been carried out with 870,000 corpses: burial in ditches, then, "to conceal the crime", disinterment followed by incineration on a lattice of train rails mounted on concrete blocks and, finally, covering over of the ashes and bones in the same ditches! To cap it all, we are told to believe that so prodigious a slaughter was perpetrated with one, and only one, diesel engine carefully maladjusted to emit an abnormal amount of carbon monoxide! The revisionists have dealt sufficiently with this technical absurdity for us to refrain from going into it here.*

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